



**THE HARRIS
CENTRE**
Memorial University

**ADVANCING INNOVATION IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
Project Summary**

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BACKGROUND

Over the last several decades, the topic of innovation has captured the attention of policymakers and researchers alike. Being innovative is now widely seen as paramount for competitiveness, economic growth, and prosperity. Within the innovation literature, size matters. Large city-regions offer the diversity and dense concentrations of people, firms, and institutions with global reaches.¹

On the other hand, rural regions and smaller cities and regions located on the periphery are often ignored or perceived as unfavourable places for innovation to thrive.² These regions are often described as ‘locked-in’ to old industrial sectors or institutionally ‘thin’.³ Yet, there is a growing movement to understand and pursue strategies for innovation in more rural and peripheral regions.⁴

The ***Advancing Innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador*** project will help build on these insights for rural and peripheral regions. It will also describe and analyze what’s working and what’s not in terms of innovation strategies across the province (national initiatives, provincial initiatives, local initiatives). We are proposing a series of *Innovation Workshops* and an *Innovation Summit* to help address these issues by bringing together firms, researchers, industry, industry associations, community leaders, and all levels of government to discuss innovation and how it can be advanced across Newfoundland and Labrador.

¹ Wolfe, D.A. 2009. *21st Century Cities in Canada: The Geography of Innovation*. The 2009 CIBC Scholar-in-Residence Lecture. Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada.

² Polèse, M., Shearmur, R., Desjardins, P.M. and Johnson, M. (2002) *The Periphery in the Knowledge Economy: The Spatial Dynamics of the Canadian Economy and the Future of Non-Metropolitan Regions in Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces*. Montreal and Moncton: Institut national de la recherche scientifique and the Canadian Institute for Research on Regional Development; Johnstone, H. and Haddow, R. 2003. Industrial Decline and High Technology Renewal in Cape Breton: Exploring the Limits of the Possible. In D.A. Wolfe (ed.), *Clusters Old and New: The Transition to a Knowledge Economic in Canada’s Regions* (pp.187-212). Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press; Hall, H.M. and B. Donald. 2009. Innovation and creativity on the periphery: challenges and opportunities in Northern Ontario. Working Paper Series: *Ontario in the Creative Age*. REF. 2009-WPONT-002; Fitjar, R.D. and Rodríguez-Pose, A. 2011. Innovating in the Periphery: Firms, Values and Innovation in Southwest Norway. *European Planning Studies*, 19(4): 555-574.

³ Tödtling, F. and Tripple, F. 2005. One size fits all? Towards a differentiated regional innovation policy approach. *Research Policy*, 34: 1203-1219.

⁴ Doloreux, D. and Dionne, S. 2008. Is regional innovation system development possible in peripheral regions? Some evidence from the case of La Pocatière, Canada. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development: An International Journal*, 20(3): 259-283; Ken Coates. 2012. *Inclusive Innovation: What is the Role of Rural and Remote Regions in the Knowledge Economy?* Presentation hosted by the Canadian Federation for Humanities and Social Sciences in partnership with the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the *Advancing Innovation in NL* project is to synthesize, share, and ground-truth knowledge related to innovation and ways it can be fostered with key participants involved in innovation (firms/entrepreneurs, local leaders, all levels of government, industry, industry associations, university/colleges). It will also distil lessons for policy and practice. More specifically, we will address the following questions:

- **What are the biggest impediments to realizing innovation-driven economic development in NL?**
- **What are the biggest opportunities?**
- **What strategies by firms, industry associations, all levels of government, regional development organizations, university/college etc. are needed to enhance innovation-driven economic development in NL?**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND TIMELINE

Phase I – Knowledge Synthesis

March 2013

- A summary of the latest research on innovation providing insights for advancing innovation strategies in Newfoundland and Labrador

Phase II – Innovation Workshops

May and June 2013

- Proposed Locations: Labrador Straits; St. Anthony; Stephenville, Clarenville; Centreville; St. John's
- Research presentations based on research undertaken in the region or on themes related to innovation in the regional economy
- Speaker(s) from the region to provide examples of innovative firms and support systems that are fostering innovation
- Roundtable discussion on innovation challenges and opportunities

Phase III – Innovation Summit

September 2013

- Report on innovation workshops (Kelly Vodden, Heather Hall, Rob Greenwood, Jacqui Walsh)
- Fund at least one participant from each Innovation Workshop to attend final event (pending funding)
- Speakers to provide examples of innovative firms or governance institutions
- Panel to respond to issues and opportunities raised during the workshops – government, industry association, firm, academic/college
- Potential Guest Speakers - Ken Coates on Inclusive Innovation – National perspective with provincial, territorial, and international examples – especially focused on science and technology; David Doloreux – firm-level innovation in coastal areas in Quebec; innovation support institutions; and small-scale manufacturing and innovation in rural communities in Quebec; Kevin Morgan on RIS3 in the EU

Phase IV – Innovation Report

September/October 2013

- Based on workshops and summit

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We will establish an advisory committee consisting of government agencies, industry associations, post-secondary, and regional/local organizations. The advisory committee will include one representative from each of the workshop locations. It will help to inform the knowledge synthesis, review analysis from the workshops, and inform analysis of findings and recommendations for the final report. The advisory committee will also assist with planning the workshops and summits.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The *Advancing Innovation in NL* project will produce a knowledge synthesis on innovation as well as a series of workshop reports and a final report based on the workshops and summits. A website will also be created to host innovation-related research studies in Newfoundland and Labrador. Ultimately, our goal is to generate ideas for future directions and respond to the overarching question of – What can industry associations, firms, all levels of government, and the university/college do to advance innovation in NL? Newfoundland and Labrador is at a crossroads, giving us the opportunity to act and collaborate to advance innovation.



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